



# MAGIC VALLEY

BLAINE, CAMAS, CASSIA, GOODING, JEROME, LINCOLN, MINIDOKA, & TWIN FALLS COUNTIES

## LABOR FORCE & EMPLOYMENT

As seen in Magic Valley Table 1, the December 2000 seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for the Magic Valley Labor Market Area was 4.4 percent, which was unchanged from November 2000. Year over year, the 4.4 percent rate was seven-tenths of a percentage point higher than December 1999. Several *Nonfarm Payroll Jobs* sectors experienced contraction in numbers from December 1999 to December 2000. The largest drop occurred in *Wholesale Trade*, dropping by 160 jobs or 6.6 percent. Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate and Retail Trade followed closely with 5.5 percent and 3.4 percent decreases respectively. The largest increases took place in *Government Administration* and *Government Education*. The overall picture is one of slowing economic and job growth, although *Nonfarm Payroll Jobs* continued to actually grow slightly. There is some caution in the *Retail Trade* and *Services* sectors, as many employers hired fewer holiday workers this year. It will be important to monitor them as a measure of consumer confidence for future job creation and expansion. Businesses are showing more tendencies toward retaining or perhaps expanding the hours of existing employees rather than new job creation, and it will be interesting to see if this trend continues into 2001.

## AREA DEVELOPMENTS

### Twin Falls County

- Twin Falls Clinic and Hospital and St. Alphonsus Regional Medical Center in Boise announced intentions to pursue a partnership. Twin Falls Clinic and Hospital had been weighing similar partnership options from both St. Alphonsus and Magic Valley Regional Medical Center in Twin Falls. Exact details of the partnerships have not yet been announced.

Magic Valley Table 1: Labor Force & Employment  
Twin Falls, Jerome, and Gooding counties

	Dec 2000*	Nov 2000	Dec 1999	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
<b>Seasonally Adjusted</b>					
Civilian Labor Force	50,080	49,950	48,420	0.3	3.4
Unemployment	2,220	2,190	1,800	1.4	23.3
% of Labor Force Unemployed	4.4	4.4	3.7		
Total Employment	47,860	47,760	46,620	0.2	2.7
<b>Unadjusted</b>					
Civilian Labor Force	49,070	49,410	47,430	-0.7	3.5
Unemployment	2,280	1,900	1,860	20.0	22.6
% of Labor Force Unemployed	4.6	3.8	3.9		
Total Employment	46,790	47,510	45,570	-1.5	2.7
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
<b>Nonfarm Payroll Jobs**</b>					
<b>Goods-Producing Industries</b>	7,160	7,290	7,100	-1.8	0.8
Mining & Construction	2,050	2,130	2,020	-3.8	1.5
Manufacturing	5,110	5,160	5,080	-1.0	0.6
Durable Goods	750	780	760	-3.8	-1.3
Nondurable Goods	4,360	4,380	4,320	-0.5	0.9
Food Processing	3,360	3,390	3,320	-0.9	1.2
All Other Nondurable Goods	1,000	990	1,000	1.0	0.0
<b>Service-Producing Industries</b>	29,760	29,930	29,690	-0.6	0.2
Transportation, Comm., & Utilities	3,060	3,110	3,070	-1.6	-0.3
Wholesale Trade	2,280	2,290	2,440	-0.4	-6.6
Retail Trade	7,840	7,870	8,120	-0.4	-3.4
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	1,370	1,360	1,450	0.7	-5.5
Services	8,510	8,720	8,670	-2.4	-1.8
Government Administration	3,730	3,630	3,520	2.8	6.0
Government Education	2,970	2,950	2,420	0.7	22.7

\*Preliminary Estimate

\*\*Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

- AT&T Broadband and Phoenix-based Cable ONE, Inc., have announced that they will trade the assets of television systems in March. After the trade, Cable ONE will own cable systems serving subscribers in and around Twin Falls, Burley, Boise, Idaho Falls, Pocatello, Lewiston, and Ontario, Oregon. AT & T Broadband will get systems serving Modesto and Santa Rosa, California. As a result of the change, five persons will lose their jobs, including the general manager, a technical operations manager, and three customer-service and field technician jobs in the Twin Falls and Burley areas. Cable ONE is already designing an upgrade of the Twin Falls cable system that will boost video capacity and pave the way for Cable ONE to offer high-speed cable modems for Internet access.
- The Twin Falls City Council unanimously approved a \$1 million bid to replace the City's Upflow Anaerobic Sludge Bed conditioning tank. This is a pre-sewage treatment tank that is important in controlling

odors created by the mixture of wastewater from Lamb-Weston and Glanbia Foods. Corrosion in the old tank has created odors that have prompted many citizen complaints in the Rock Creek Canyon area, and the new tank should alleviate the situation.

- The Farmhouse Collection—a family owned furniture manufacturing enterprise that relocated from the Wood River Valley to Twin Falls in 1998—and the College of Southern Idaho have teamed up for a joint training and job intern program to develop and retain woodworking employees for the Twin Falls facility. The Farmhouse Collection chose ten student workers from over 100 applicants. The students will spend their first semester learning basic skills and their second semester interning at The Farmhouse Collection shop. The program is an example of how the College of Southern Idaho can work with prospective new businesses and existing businesses to tailor training needs. Funding for much of these projects comes from Workforce Development Training Fund grants.

#### **Jerome, Blaine, Camas, Gooding, and Lincoln Counties**

- The City of Jerome unanimously voted to accept wastewater from a new sewer line to be constructed by the Jerome County Sewer and Water District for the Crossroads Ranch Development. This is a significant step in giving Crossroads Ranch the go-ahead to begin developing the 500-acre property located near Interstate 84 in southern Jerome County. The City and Crossroads Ranch have been negotiating this agreement since the property was purchased in 1994. The sewer line will be seven miles long and is estimated to cost the Jerome County Sewer and Water District \$4 million. The line will connect with the City's wastewater treatment plant on the northwest side of Jerome and the line will have capabilities to handle 1.8 million gallons per day. Crossroads Ranch developer Arlen Crouch has already begun to recruit businesses into the development, and it is hoped that the project will be a large economic development area for the Magic Valley.
- Jerome High School has been awarded a \$1.75 million grant from the Albertson's Foundation to be used to improve instruction and increase achievement in the Jerome School District. The State of Idaho recently implemented a new exiting standards examination that will apply to high school students graduating in 2005. The Jerome School Dis-

trict will be using the funds to align with state standards and improve instruction so that students are adequately prepared for the exit examination. The \$1.75 million will be awarded over three and a half years, with the first disbursement of \$455,000 arriving soon.

#### **Cassia and Minidoka Counties**

- Kraft Foods has purchased the old Thompson cash yards—the combination lumber yard, surplus business, and antique store that has been closed for about 25 years—in order to build a new milk receiving building. The two-bay drive through will accommodate more than 20 trucks per day when it is completed in the late spring. A finished product cooler also will be built on the property and is expected to be complete in early summer 2001. U.S. Auctions will be conducting the sale of Thompson Cash Yard's remaining inventory, and the buildings will be dismantled to make room for all of Kraft's eventual expansion.
- Rupert's downtown area is now an official national historic district listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The listing of 48 historical elements on the register includes the Rupert Square, City Hall, and the Wilson Theater, as well as a number of businesses. Rupert hired an historical consultant to help write the nomination, which included a profile of each building and a description of how each building significantly impacted the commercial core of the city. A rigorous review of the nomination took place by an Idaho State Preservation Office committee to determine historical and architectural integrity.

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Gregory Rogers, Labor Market Analyst  
771 N. College Road, Twin Falls, ID 83303  
(208) 736-3000  
E-mail: [grogers@labor.state.id.us](mailto:grogers@labor.state.id.us)